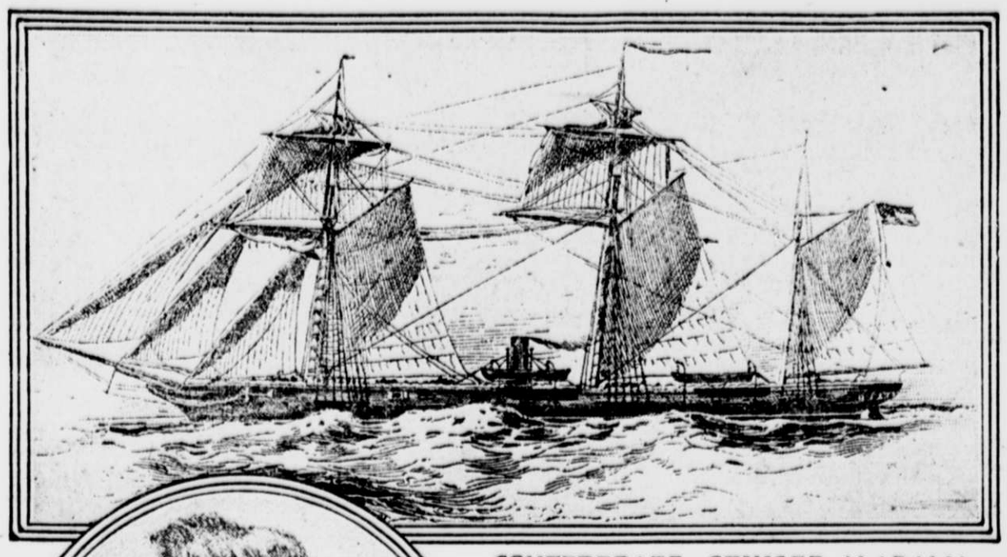
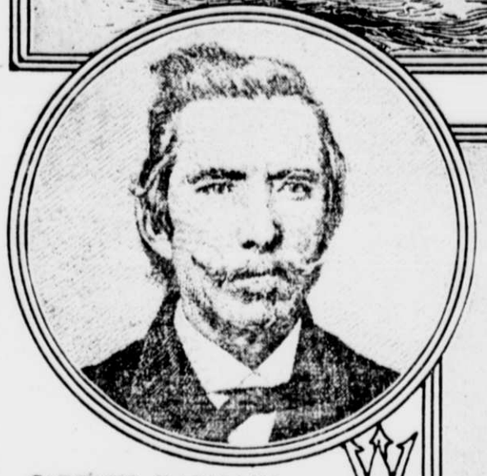
GERMANY'S SEA WOLVES RECALL ALABAMA'S ACTIVITIES

Destruction to British Trade Caused by Cruisers Emden, Dresden and Leipzig a Repetition of What Happened During Civil War

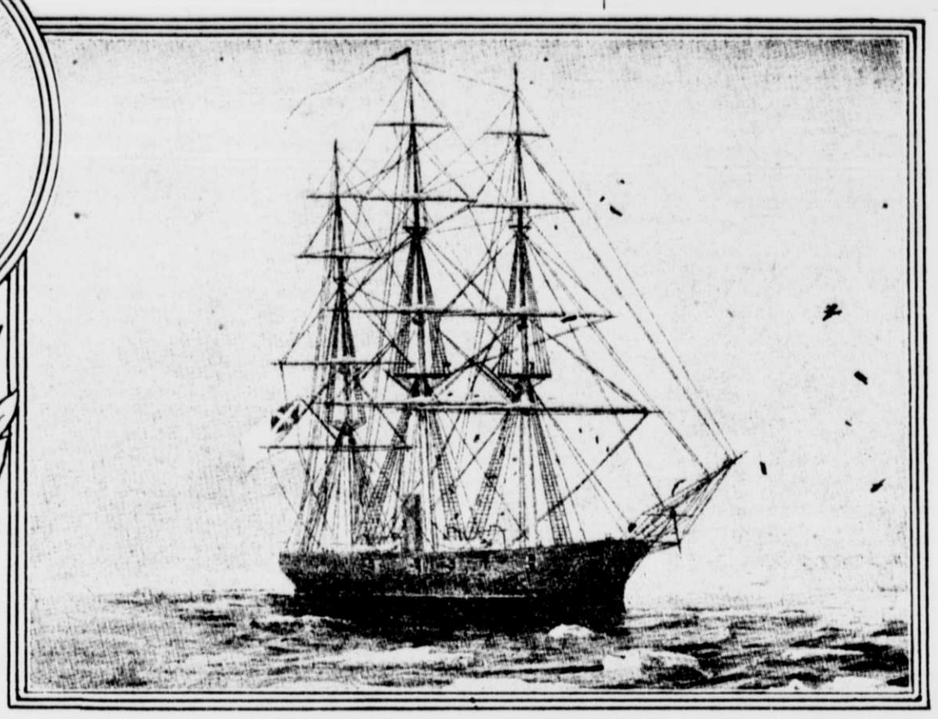
Present Nautical Game of Hide and Seek May Continue for Months ---Work of Commerce Destroyer in Time of War



CONFEDERATE CRUISER ALABAMA



CAPTAIN RAPHAEL SEMMES



CONFEDERATE STATES STEAMER SHENANDOAH

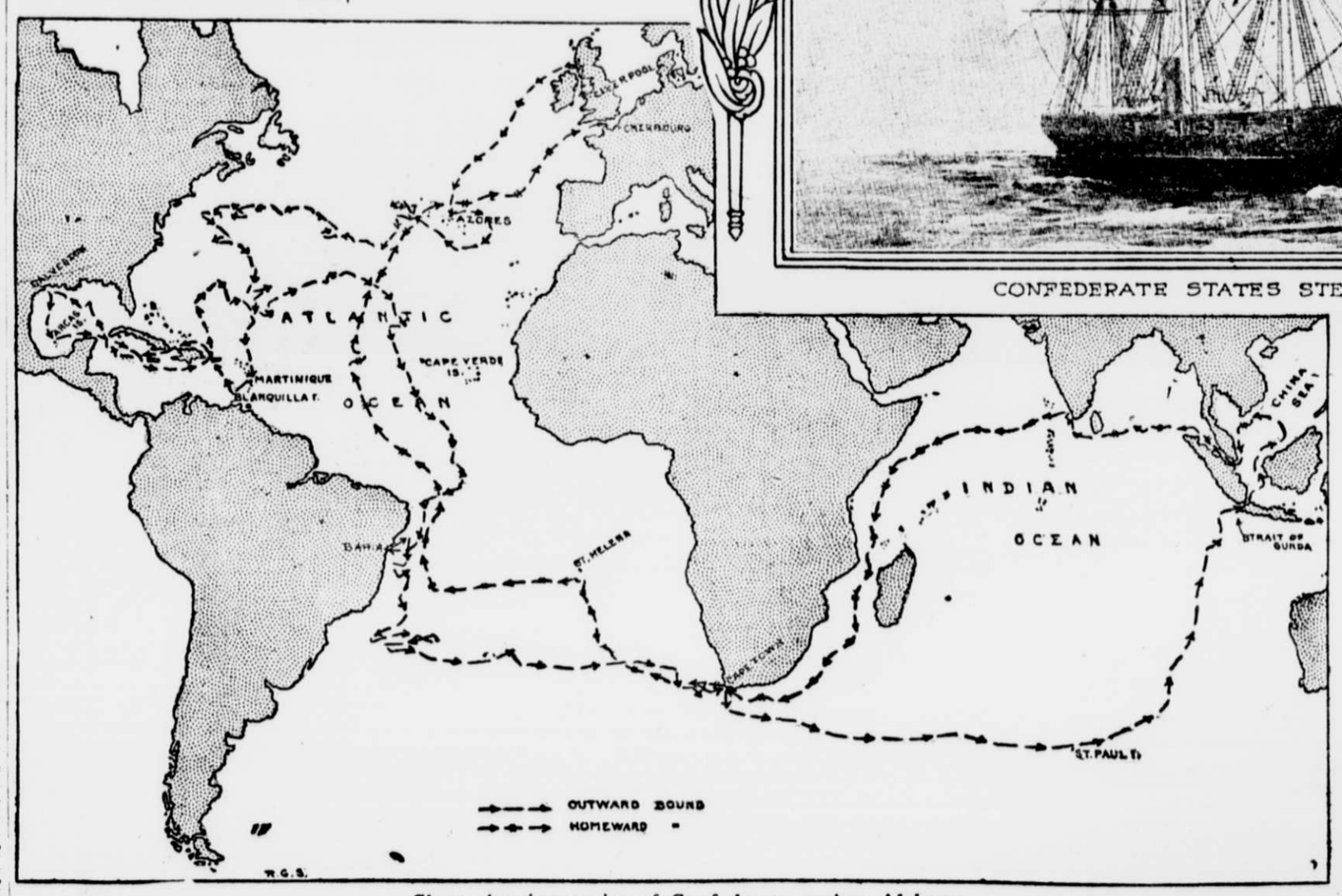


Chart showing cruise of Confederate cruiser Alabama.

Cruisers.	No. of U.S. Vessels Captured.
Alabama	69
Florida	37
Shenandoah	36
Tallahassee	29
Sumter	18
Tacony	15
Georgia	9
Clarence	8
Jeff Davis	8
Olustee	6
Winslow	5
Chickamauga	4
Retribution	3
Calhoun	3
Echo	2
Tuscaloosa	2
Boston	2
Nashville	2
York	1
Total	259

ENGLISH pride has been rudely jarred by the way in which Germany's elusive cruisers have been sinking British ships of trade. The Emden has bagged a score of them in the Indian Ocean, and the speedy Karlsruhe has captured something like fifteen merchantmen in the waters of the North and South Atlantic. And the work of destruction goes on despite the fact that the Karlsruhe, Emden, Dresden and Leipzig are hunted by no fewer than seventy ships of war sailing under the flags of France, Russia Japan and England.

This nautical game of hide and seek may easily run on for months to come, because the seas and oceans are wide and the German cruisers have out of the way rendezvous for their colliers, and there are plenty of havens among the remote islands where a halt can be made, some repairs effected, and coal taken aboard from waiting craft. Indeed, this matter of colliers is another proof of the looseness of commercial morals and the laxness of patriotism in time of war. It is quite likely that tramp steamers sailing under the flags of the allies are actually employed in keeping these German cruisers fit for their work. Again, the vessels captured or destroyed are also the means of providing fuel, provisions and other needful operative stores.

The excitement in British maritime circles is but a repetition of what happened in the United States during the years of the civil war; and once more the Germans have proved themselves more profitable students of naval history. The Kaiser's strategists planned for this mode of warfare when they built their speedy cruisers of small gun power. Professedly, these vessels were for routine police work in far away seas. As a matter of fact, they were deliberately designed to prey upon the defenceless merchantman of the foe, and they are doing their work too well now to please British shipowners.

The British navy has kept the German battle squadrons within fortified harbors. The Federal fleets established a kindred blockade of the Confederate ports at the very beginning of the civil war. In the beginning there was really no Confederate navy, and the only hope of the South lay in equipping privateers to prey upon the abundant commerce of the Northern ports. Perhaps the programme lacked the thrills of strife between ships of war, but this order of attack cost the North millions of dollars and damaged the oversea trade of the United States so grievously that it has never recovered its former prominence.

Following upon the success of its privateers—the Federal Government called them pirates and threatened to treat the officers and crews as such—the Confederate States obtained and commissioned a number of commerce destroying cruisers, twelve of them decidedly notable, and for the better part of three years they roamed upon the seven seas despite the utmost vigilance on the part of the United States naval authorities.

The first of the Confederate cruisers was the Sumter, and early in July of 1861, under Capt. Raphael Semmes, she managed to slip out of the Mississippi and to elude the U. S. S. Brooklyn, which was then blockading the mouth of the river. The Sumter's career was a short one, but before she reached Gibraltar in January, 1862, and was put out of commission she had made eighteen captures. One incident of her cruise is worthy of mention because it showed how preeminently fit Semmes was for the higher command which came to him on the Alabama.

On November 13, 1861, the Sumter ran into St. Pierre, Martinique, for coal, but before her bunkers were filled the U. S. S. Iroquois hove to outside and shortly afterward entered the harbor. The Governor of the port refused to send the Sumter out at once as the Federal commander requested and insisted that the Iroquois should not leave the harbor until twenty-four hours after the Sumter had sailed. To avoid this handicap the Iroquois steamed off to the mouth of the bay and just outside of the three mile limit, where she lay in wait for the Confederate cruiser.

After a blockade of nine days Semmes decided to sail on November 23. Just as the fort gun boomed at 8 o'clock the Sumter started seaward. Semmes knew that he was being watched and that an American merchantman, the Windward, in harbor, was to signal to the warship in the offing; two lights if the Sumter turned to the south and one light if she headed north. Cunningly, Semmes steered boldly southward until the two lights gleamed from the craft in port, then he halted the Sumter in the inky shadows cast by the towering hills that dropped abruptly into the sea.

The watchful Iroquois lost no time in hastening at full speed to the south hoping to overtake the little Confederate cruiser. After a while Semmes turned his vessel's bow around and shaped a course due north under all steam. The manner in which he outwitted the commander of the Iroquois was an experience which Semmes put to good use many months later when he got out of the same harbor with the Alabama despite the presence of a Federal man-o'-war on the watch.

Next came the cruiser Florida, which was a screw steamer built in Liverpool for naval purposes and purchased by the Confederate authorities and duly commissioned as a commerce destroyer in August, 1862. The Florida did notable work until she was cut out from under the guns of the Brazilian forts at Bahia by the U. S. S. Wachusett in October, 1864, a plain violation of the neutrality of Brazil. Before the Florida's career was thus brought to a close she had taken thirty-seven American merchantmen, and among them the richest prize of the war—a vessel representing a value of $1,500,000.

Early in the summer of 1863 the Florida captured fourteen prizes and one of these, taken off the coast of Brazil, was the little brig Clarence. Capt. Maffitt of the Florida determined to turn the Clarence into a tender, and put Lieut. Charles W. Read in command. "The only armament was a six pounder boat howitzer, but with some spare spars Read constructed several make believe or 'Quaker' guns that frightened some of the American merchant skippers whom he overhauled." A bit of the after history of the Clarence and Lieut. Read deserves recounting, for it exemplifies the dashing spirit of the Confederate cruiser commanders.

Off Cape Hatteras the Clarence overtook and captured the bark Whistling Wind on her way to New Orleans with army stores. The Whistling Wind and three other prizes were burned and a fourth bonded. The next capture was a fine bark, the Tacony, and being a much better ship than his own, Read burned the Clarence and transferred his crew to the Tacony. He then proceeded along the coast of New England, and in two weeks had made ten more prizes.

His work in Northern waters caused consternation, and every port importuned the Secretary of the Navy to despatch a ship of war to protect its vessels. Indeed, so hysterical became the public and the authorities that nautical junk was bought up right and left at exorbitant prices and hastily armed to go in search of the Tacony. Before the Confederate cruiser ended her brief days there were more than a half a hundred ships rushing wildly about the Atlantic coast in search of her.

Read had a nice taste in the matter of ships, and shortly after passing north of New York he made a prize of the Archer, a better craft than the Tacony and, accordingly, he again transferred his flag, and sent the Tacony to the bottom. All this while his commands had been sailing vessels. Read was anxious to secure a steamer, make a raid down the coast and then to run into Wilmington, North Carolina.

From one of his prizes he learned that the only armed vessel at Portland, Me., was the revenue cutter Caleb Cushing, and undaunted he determined to capture her. On June 27, 1863, he sailed into Portland harbor, a seemingly peaceful merchant craft and was unmolested. After dark he captured the cutter by boarding her. Then securing her crew between decks, he put out of harbor under sail, but was detected by the inbound Boston steamer, aboard which was the very officer who was to command the Cushing and to hunt down the Tacony. Read was overtaken by an expedition sent hastily from Portland and surrounded by a superior force. He abandoned the cutter, but set her afire, so that she blew up before recapture.

New Yorkers had their measure of fright during the hey days of the confederate cruisers, and the name Tallahassee sent a shiver through the spines of ship owners and merchants at the time. Her cruising ground was the Atlantic coast. On August 11, 1864, she took her first prize within eighty miles of Sandy Hook, and promptly sent the craft to the bottom. Four more vessels fell to her lot in the next two days, and one of the prizes was converted into an armed tender, which later captured three ships. All but one of the vessels were burned, and that one was bonded and sent into New York with paroled prisoners. Before the Tallahassee's days were done she had captured or destroyed a total of twenty-nine American merchantmen.

No account of Confederate cruisers would be complete without some reference to the grim work done by the Shenandoah. In the latter part of 1864 this vessel was purchased from her English owners, armed, and started upon her destructive career. She was commanded by an officer familiar with the whale fisheries of the North Pacific, and her mission was to destroy the New Bedford fleet in the Bering Strait and in the region of the Sandwich Islands. The Shenandoah carried out her mission with distressing completeness, and her log book recorded thirty-six prizes.

Twenty-one of the whalers she captured and destroyed, valued at $3,000,000, were taken after the war was ended. In those far off waters news travelled slowly, and Capt. Brooke was halted then only by the announcement of peace brought to him by a whaler he had under his very guns for destruction.

The story of the Alabama, and the fact that England had to pay us $20,000,000 because of her, is peculiarly pertinent now because of the losses British commerce is suffering at the hands of the German commerce destroyers.

The 290, as the vessel was known by her builders, the Lairds, lay at Birkenhead in June, 1862, professedly getting ready to be delivered to a continental Government. She slipped away one night and sailed to Terceira, one of the Azores. There she was joined by a vessel laden with guns and ammunition and a few days later by the Bahama, which carried Capt. Semmes and certain of his officers.

The transfer of the military stores was made just outside of the three mile limit, and on Sunday, August 24, the crew were piped aft and the officers, decked out in grey uniforms glittering with lace, appeared with Capt. Semmes. The latter made a stirring speech, addressing his crew more as Englishmen than as defenders of the Southern cause. "Then the band struck up 'Dixie' the Confederate flag with its starry bars and white centre was run up, and the craft proclaimed the Confederate steam sloop Alabama, ready for service."

Speaking of the crew, our sailor author describes them in extremely uncomplimentary terms. Some of them were little short of criminals and many of them were examples of the very worst nautical element to be found on the docks of Liverpool. They were most of them utterly reckless and the idea of prize money and service just within the law appealed to them strongly. Such was the general getup and the mood of the enlisted element of the Alabama when she shaped her course away from the Azores and began her work a few days later by taking the American whaler Ocmulgee on September 5.

The Ocmulgee was homeward bound after a forty months cruise and was laden with a cargo of oil. Her skipper had heard nothing about the outbreak of hostilities and he was dumfounded both by the news and the untimely ending of a successful voyage. Semmes set fire to the whaler and sailed away for other game of the same sort.

Before a week had passed the Alabama had captured several more whalers, and her prisoners became so numerous that they had to be housed on the main deck under a temporary shelter rigged up out of spare spars and a trysail. Again on September 16 a large schooner was made a prize, and after removing her crew Semmes determined to try his men at the guns, using the captured craft for a target at the close range of 600 yards. "The practice was poor enough and I felt sure that if we ran across a Yankee man-o'-war we would most likely be knocked to pieces," says the historian of the forecastle.

Before despatching the first batch of prisoners shoreward in one of his bonded captures Semmes began to gather recruits from among the crews of his prizes. In this way he got rid of some of the least desirable of the ship's company, but among those that remained were men of a mutinous spirit, who caused him lots of trouble and leavened their companions with their rebellious tendencies.

As soon as the United States authorities learned of the departure of cruiser 290 from Liverpool—news travelled slowly in those days—Federal men-o'-war were started off in pursuit of her. It was like looking for a needle in a haystack, because the Alabama had been able to revictual and even to take on a goodly supply of coal from her prizes and had no need of seeking port. Accordingly while the Federal naval vessels had no news of the Confederate craft, Semmes got the mails and the latest tidings from his captives and with rare exception he burned his prizes and sent them to the bottom. When he did despatch an occasional captured vessel to port to get rid of his prisoners he was careful to send the craft on her way when days out from harbor, and in the interval he had so shifted his field of activities that there was no clue to his position.

After some weeks in the neighborhood of the Azores, Semmes decided to shape his course toward Sandy Hook, but violent gales south of Newfoundland damaged some of his spars and wracked the Alabama considerably, so that the Confederate cruiser was turned south after getting into the latitude of New York. Down into the Caribbean the Alabama worked, picking up prize after prize on the way.

Off Martinique the Alabama met her collier, and to avoid trouble Semmes sent her on to the lonely island of Blanquilla, off the coast of Venezuela. His fuel ship had scarcely got safely away when along came the United States ship San Jacinto, "the old wagon," as Semmes called her, and proceeded to blockade the port. Semmes knew the waters perfectly in the neighborhood, and one black night, just as he had done in the Sumter, he slipped out and made good his escape. Then on to Blanquilla the Alabama went and recoaled, and about two weeks later the San Jacinto reached that island.

Learning that an expedition was fitting out for Texas under Gen. Banks, Semmes planned to intercept the fleet of troop ships and to play havoc with them and get away. Accordingly he headed for the coast near Galveston, but instead of encountering the fleet of transports he stumbled upon a naval squadron of five ships at anchor. One of them was sent out to meet the Alabama, and Semmes headed for the offing, thus drawing his pursuer away from her support.

Just as night fell the two vessels came within hailing distance, and in answer to the question from the Federal craft Semmes announced his vessel to be "Her Britannic Majesty's Steamer Petrel." Getting within a range of about a hundred yards, the Confederate skipper declared his ship the Alabama, and immediately broke loose with a whole broadside, which landed squarely upon the enemy. It was a matter of a few minutes only before the ex-ferry boat Hatteras was sinking, and with seamanlike promptness and skill the Confederates saved every one of their enemies. It is a notable fact that this modest tinclad was the only ship of the Federal fleet that measured forces with the Alabama until that fateful Sunday in June, 1864, when the Kearsarge brought the Confederate craft's career to a spectacular close.

Scared off from Galveston, Semmes spent December 25, 1862, at Arcas Islands, where the men were allowed to land upon one of those dismal keys for a holiday. The day was not a brilliant success in that respect and the outing ended in a free fight. So the story goes: "One of the officers remarked to Cocky Bill, who came aboard terribly cut up, 'that he made bad use of his liberty' and got the cheerful answer, 'that it was a poor 'art as never rejoices.'"

Touching at Cape Town on the way westward, the hopes were high among the crew for a speedy run thence to England. Before reaching the neighborhood of the European coast, it was learned that the U. S. S. Kearsarge was especially on the lookout for the Alabama, and the poet of the forecastle broke loose again with the last of his efforts:

We're homeward bound, we're homeward bound,
And soon shall stand on English ground.
But 'ere that English land was seen,
We first must fight the Kearsarge.

The poet was certainly something of a prophet, but the outcome was not altogether as he confidently predicted. On June 11, 1864, the Confederate cruiser slipped into Cherbourg by the eastern entrance, and anchored near the mole, and three days later the Kearsarge appeared in the offing. As to the condition of the Alabama, one of her crew has given the world this view of her unfitness for combat:

"To my mind, the Alabama was in no condition to meet an enemy, unless under very favorable conditions; and these conditions were not likely to come about just now. Our ship was no longer weatherly, the way we forged through the water showed that our sheathing was in a bad condition, and we had not fired a broadside for a twelvemonth. Our fixed ammunition had been put up some two years, and twice I had seen our pivot gun shells fail to explode; so we were taking chances in fighting."

Indeed, had the pivot gun ammunition been what it should have been for action, another outcome might have resulted, for it was an unexploded 8 inch shell, lodged in the stern post of the Kearsarge that made all the difference between victory and disaster to the Federal cruiser.

However, the crew of the Alabama were philosophical. "We've had a plum pudding voyage, and it will be a fitting termination to have a square fight with an antagonist of our size, and we'll do our best."

Everybody knows what happened on the 19th of June. Sunday had commonly been a day of successes during the long months of ravaging on the part of the Alabama, but the last Sunday of her existence was a calamitous exception. Just the same before her career was ended the Confederate cruiser had made for herself an unparalleled record of depredations, and sixty-nine merchant ships had fallen prey to her during a period of less than two years of commerce destroying. The German ships have got a deal to do yet before they can be properly classed with their prototype of less than 1,100 tons register.

Ivan the Tommy Atkins of Russia---An Englishman's Impressions

Continued from Sixth Page.

long steppes of Little Russia, on the banks of the Volga, in the camp at Krasno Selo, Finland, or in barracks at Cronstadt or Petersburg. Singing in the ranks is held to be of great importance and is encouraged by the officers.

The chief singer, who marches in front of each company and gives the opening lines of the verses, receives extra pay and many marks of favor. Gen. Annenkoff once said to me, "The soldier who sings marches on to victory." Some of the melodies are sad, of others the words are "risky"; but many, especially among the Cossacks, are full of life and vigor. Without vodka, music, song and dance and frequent "prasniks" (holidays), the existence of a soldier would be unbearable; for what with hard toil, constant drill, poor pay and not overpleasant food he has usually not a good time of it in barracks, unless he can get private work.

When well treated, the men are exceedingly attached to their officers and no sacrifice is too great for them. They set little value on their own lives or on anybody else's when it is a question of duty or of fighting. "Shezn copjeka," (Life is a farthing) is one of their favorite proverbs. Their religious character is seen in conflict, for they look on a battle, not as a sanguinary fight, but as the defence of their faith, Czar and country. In the brave struggle of the "Varjag" against unequal odds at Chemulpo the Russian sailors, according to the evidence of their confessor, as a Russian officer described them, it is their great pleasure to heat the banja like a furnace and then rush out in a nude condition, rolling themselves in the rough snow, even when the temperature is 15 to 20 degrees below zero. When there is no snow handy, they break a hole in the ice of the nearest river, which is frequently two or three feet thick, and have a dip. They then hurry back to the warm and comfortable banja to restore their circulation.

Truly what is life to a Russian is death to a foreigner, and the ordinary conditions of service in time of war, except the actual fighting, are really not more arduous than the ordinary life of the Russian in his home.

Although the relations between officers and men are exceedingly democratic, discipline is most severe; grave infringement of the voenoi oostav (military code) is visited with death. But, as I have said before, human life is valued lightly in this country, especially among the peasantry, and execution does not appear so horrible and cruel to them as it would to us.

When one calls to mind the extreme severity of the military code under Nicholas I., Peter the Great and Catherine II., the stringent regulations now in force in the Russian army appear quite mild compared with those in the "good old times" about which people are so fond of prating. Beating or cuffing the soldiers is strictly forbidden, although this regulation is sometimes overlooked by the sergeants.

When we take into consideration the inexhaustible resources in men, money and material which are at the disposal of the Russian Government, it is difficult not to believe that Russia will emerge victorious from this terrible racial and political struggle against the combined forces of Austria and Germany, provided that her officers and generals are on a line with her brave and hardy soldiers, and that the alien races subject to her sway remain loyal during the war.

LIEBKNECHT, CORRESPONDENT.

German Socialist in Holland as Representative of Party Paper.

Special Correspondence to THE SUN.

MAASTRICHT, Holland, Sept. 6.—I have just returned from Liege, where I met Dr. Liebknecht, the Socialist leader in the Reichstag, who was supposed to have been murdered.

"I thought you were executed, Herr Doktor," I remarked.

"Not yet," he replied.

"And not fighting in the army, as reported?"

"No."

"You probably know that America was considerably worked up over reports that you were executed and that Secretary Bryan interested himself personally to the extent of cabling several times to ascertain whether the reports from London were true?"

"So I heard from Ambassador Gerard."

"Is it true that you volunteered, the same as Dr. Ludwig Frank?"

"No."

"Are you going to fight?"

"The section of the Landsturm to which I belong has not yet been called out. I don't think they will want or need me."

"What are you doing here?"

"Just what you are."

"War correspondent for the Socialist press?"

"If you wish to call it so."

At that moment Lieut.-Gen. Kollebe, the military governor of Liege, appeared and asked that Liebknecht be presented to him.

Dr. Liebknecht was uncommunicative about himself and what he has been doing or what his plans are. He did not want to talk. He would not give his opinion as to the probable effect of the war on socialism. Regarded as the military's arch foe in Germany, the most marked attention was paid Liebknecht by the officers.

Only we in Germany, who know the gulf between the military and Liebknecht in normal times, can appreciate the picture of this anti-militarist drinking captured wine with the officers in the underground casino of Fort Pontisse half an hour later.

84 Members of Landtag Fighting.

BERLIN, via London, Oct. 18.—The statistical bureau of the Prussian Diet has issued a list of members of the "Landtag" now fighting in the German army. The list contains 45 members of the Conservative party, 10 of the Liberal-Conservative, 12 of the Centre, 16 of the National-Liberal and 1 of the Progressive party.